

NEWS RELEASE
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Public invited to honor Douglas County Health Champions

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department will recognize Rick Martin and Di Xie as the 2015 Douglas County Health Champions during a community breakfast April 10.

The breakfast will be from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. at the Community Health Facility, 200 Maine St. The event is open to the public and is part of the Health Department's celebration of National Public Health Week.

Health Board Chair Maley Wilkins said Martin and Xie are being honored for their significant efforts to model, encourage and promote health in the community. "Our Champions have touched thousands of lives through their efforts to encourage healthy eating. We hope residents will join us in thanking them for their contributions."

The honorees:

- **Rick Martin**, of Lawrence, a chef and owner of Limestone Pizza, has made it his mission to educate diverse audiences about how to prepare healthy foods and the importance of a healthy diet. Martin designed and piloted cooking classes for Douglas County's food bank Just Food and these classes have taught hundreds of low-income families how to eat on a budget. He also helped the food bank secure a produce cooler. Martin has worked extensively with Lawrence Public School's Farm to School program, where he sits on the program's advisory board. He has provided food demonstrations in school cafeterias for hundreds of middle school students. Additionally, he has become a statewide speaker and food service staff trainer. During the past year, Martin founded the Lawrence Chefs and Farmers Alliance, a coalition to connect chefs and farmers to facilitate restaurant purchases from local farms. Martin also supports the local economy through Limestone Pizza by purchasing locally-grown produce and locally-raised meats.
- **Di Xie** (pronounced she-uh), 16, of Lawrence, a Free State High School junior, is passionate about encouraging youth to eat more fruits and vegetables, and she does this through her work as a student gardener in the "Growing Food, Growing Health" project. The project evolves around growing food in a garden at West Middle School and then serving it in the school's cafeteria or selling it at The Community Mercantile. Xie will be entering her fourth year with the project, and she began by working in the garden and learning how to grow produce. The next year she became a mentor gardener and helped her peers learn how to plant and care for the garden. Xie also has spoken about the project at public events and meetings, including the 2013 Farm to School Celebration.